

Introduction To This Guide

These daily devotions are provided to encourage you to listen and reflect on how God is speaking to you during this Season of Lent. The question at the end of each day's contemplation is intended to foster further reflection and prayer throughout the day. In addition, space is provided for you to document your thoughts on how you hear God speaking to you at this time. May you be blessed and transformed through the Holy Spirit as you ponder God's word during this most holy of seasons. ++ *Provided by:* Community Missions Inc., 1570 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14303, Phone: (716) 285-3403, www.communitymissions.org

Where Do I Begin?

Begin each day with the Prayer of Illumination to help, prepare your heart to hear God's word for you. Read "to be formed and transformed rather than to gather information...Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed...Read as one awake, one waiting for the beloved. Read with reverence."

Let us Pray a *Prayer of Illumination*:

All-Seeing One, above me, around me, within me —

guide my vision as I engage with your sacred words.

Look down upon me, look out from within me, look all around me.

See through my eyes, hear through my ears, feel through my heart.

God of Wisdom, touch me where I need to be touched;

and when my heart is touched, give me the grace to lay

down this Holy Book and ask significant questions:

Why has my heart been touched by you?

How am I to be changed through your touch?

All-Seeing One, I need to change, I need to look a little more like You.

May these sacred words change and transform me.

Then I can meet You face to face...when I shall be healed forever.

Your Word and the touch of your Spirit bring healing...

a healing that will last.

O Eye of God, look not away.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

and put a new and right spirit within me. Amen.

Adapted from *A Tree Full of Angels* by Macrina Wiederkehr [As quoted in *A Guide To Prayer For All God's People*, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room]

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER - Day 54

PRESSING ON

Philippians 3:7-16

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

THE GOAL

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him...having a righteousness [from God]... that comes through faith in Christ. Therefore, the goal is to be in Christ Jesus and to make him our own life because Christ Jesus has made us his own.

I read recently that "Christ in me" is not an impossible ideal. "Christ in me" means Christ bearing me along from within...[it is] the motive power that carries me on...giving my whole life a wonderful poise and lift, and turning every burden into wings...To be 'in Christ,' to have Christ within, is to realize your [faith] not as something you have to bear but as something by which you are borne, this is Christianity. [But] it is more: it is release and liberty, life with an endless song at its heart. It means feeling within you, as long as life here lasts, the

carrying power of Love Almighty; and underneath you, when you come to die, the touch of everlasting arms.”¹¹

PRAYER

“And God will lift you up on eagle’s wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of God’s hand.”¹² Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

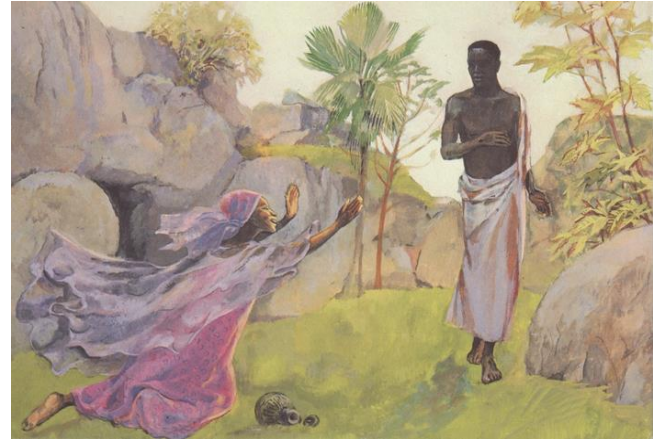
Make a plan for how you will continue to nurture your faith, maturing and growing in Christ and with Christ *holding fast to what you have attained*.

Thank you for spending the past 54 days of devotion and prayer with us. We pray that your journey through Lent and into Easter has brought you closer to our Risen Lord, Jesus the Christ.

*Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow
Rev. Mark H. Breese*

Second Sunday of Easter – Day 54

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Easter - Christ appears to Mary. JESUS MAFA. (1979)

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER THE GOAL



This week’s devotional resource was written by Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow, President of the American Baptist Churches of New York State Board of Missions, and edited by Rev. Mark H. Breese of Community Missions. The content was created specifically keeping in mind the populations served by Community Missions.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- Scripture Verses are from the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*, HarpurCollins Publishers, 1989.
- The choice of Daily Scripture texts are taken from *Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton*, Linguori Publications.
- ^{*}“Free from the Law of Lent”, *Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton*, Linguori Publications, p. 102.
- ^{**}“They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love #284, *The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration*, Word Music, Waco, TX, 1986.
- ^aPrayer, *Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton*, Linguori Publications, p. 103., ^aIbid, “The Power of Easter,” p. 104., ^aIbid, Prayer, p. 105.
- ^{aa}*One Tin Soldier*, by The Original Caste, 1971.
- ¹¹“Morning Has Broken #145, *The United Methodist Hymnal*, The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989., ¹²Ibid, On Eagle’s Wings #143

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